

AMENDED IN SENATE JULY 16, 2009

AMENDED IN SENATE JUNE 25, 2009

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 23, 2009

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2009–10 REGULAR SESSION

## **ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 567**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Villines**

February 25, 2009

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An act to amend Sections 8545.1, 8545.2, 8545.4, 8546.2, 8547.2, 8547.4, 8547.5, 8547.6, 8547.7, and 8548.9 of, and to add Section 8546.10 to, the Government Code, relating to government practices.

### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 567, as amended, Villines. Government practices.

(1) Existing law sets forth the duties and powers of the Bureau of State Audits and makes reference to audits and investigative audits. Existing law also prohibits the State Auditor or his or her employees from releasing to the public, among other things, any papers, correspondence, or any substantive information pertaining to any audit not completed.

This bill would revise the authority of the Bureau of State Audits to specifically perform investigations and would delete the reference to investigative audits. The bill would make conforming changes.

The bill would establish the Clearinghouse for Government Innovation and Improvement Program, as resources become available, within the Bureau of State Audits to receive and review, in good faith, submissions from the public that recommend how to improve the operations of the state or how to direct the focus of the state relative to its essential functions. The State Auditor would be required to take reasonable

measures to create and maintain public awareness of the program as resources become available.

(2) The California Whistleblower Protection Act sets forth the circumstances and procedures under which a state employee, as defined, may report improper governmental activities, as defined, or make a protected disclosure, as defined, to the State Auditor, and prohibits retaliation or reprisal against a state employee for these acts.

This bill would add an individual appointed by the Legislature *to a state board or commission and who is not an a Member or* employee of the Legislature to the list of state employees covered by these provisions *and would provide that state employee includes any former employee who met specified criteria during his or her employment.* The bill would change the definition of improper governmental activity to include any activity by an employee that is undertaken ~~inside a state office or that is undertaken outside a state office that directly relates to state government~~ *in the performance of the employee's duties, undertaken inside a state office, or, if undertaken outside a state office by the employee, directly relates to state government, whether or not that activity is within the scope of his or her employment,* and would change the definition of protected disclosure to specifically include any good faith communication to the Bureau of State Audits alleging an improper governmental activity and any evidence delivered to the Bureau of State Audits in support of the allegation. After receiving a copy of the State Auditor's investigative report, the appointing power would have 60 days to serve a notice of adverse action upon the employee who is the subject of the investigative report. The State Auditor also would be authorized to provide to the employees' appointing power any evidence gathered during the investigation that in his or her judgment is necessary to support an adverse action. The State Auditor would be required to create, as specified, the means for the submission of reports of improper governmental activity both by transmission via mail or other carrier to a specified mailing address and by electronic transmission through an Internet Web site portal. *The State Auditor would be prohibited from disclosing the identity of a person who provides information in confidence to further an investigation.* The State Auditor may include recommended actions to prevent the continuation or recurrence of the improper governmental activity with the report that details the improper governmental activity to the head of the employing agency. The State Auditor would be required to report, as specified, to the Joint Legislative Budget

Committee, the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, and the Department of Finance with respect to each recommendation he or she has made, as specified, that was reported more than one year ago and that has not been fully implemented by the affected agency. The bill also would make conforming changes.

(3) This bill also would declare that the provisions of this act shall impose no cost on the state and shall be implemented solely using existing resources.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Section 8545.1 of the Government Code is  
2 amended to read:

3 8545.1. (a) The State Auditor, and any employee or former  
4 employee of the bureau, shall not divulge or make known to any  
5 person not employed by the bureau in any manner not expressly  
6 permitted by law any particulars of any record, document, or  
7 information the disclosure of which is restricted by law from  
8 release to the public. This prohibition includes, but is not limited  
9 to, the restrictions on the release of records, documents, or  
10 information set forth in Section 8545.

11 (b) Subdivision (a) also applies to either of the following:

12 (1) Any person or business entity that is contracting with or has  
13 contracted with the bureau and to the employees and former  
14 employees of that person or business entity.

15 (2) The officers and employees of and any person or business  
16 entity that is contracting with or has contracted with any state or  
17 local governmental agency or publicly created entity that has  
18 assisted the bureau in the course of any audit or investigation or  
19 that has received a draft copy of any report or other draft document  
20 from the bureau for comment or review.

21 (c) Any officer, employee, or person who discloses the  
22 particulars of any record, document, or other information in  
23 violation of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor.

24 SEC. 2. Section 8545.2 of the Government Code is amended  
25 to read:

26 8545.2. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the  
27 State Auditor during regular business hours shall have access to

1 and authority to examine and reproduce, any and all books,  
2 accounts, reports, vouchers, correspondence files, and other  
3 records, bank accounts, and money or other property, of any agency  
4 of the state, whether created by the California Constitution or  
5 otherwise, any local governmental entity, including any city,  
6 county, and school or special district, and any publicly created  
7 entity, for any audit or investigation. Any officer or employee of  
8 any agency or entity having these records or property in his or her  
9 possession, under his or her control, or otherwise having access  
10 to them, shall permit access to, and examination and reproduction  
11 thereof, upon the request of the State Auditor or his or her  
12 authorized representative.

13 (b) For the purposes of access to and examination and  
14 reproduction of the records and property described in subdivision  
15 (a), an authorized representative of the State Auditor is an employee  
16 or officer of the state or local governmental agency or publicly  
17 created entity involved and is subject to any limitations on release  
18 of the information as may apply to an employee or officer of the  
19 state or local governmental agency or publicly created entity. For  
20 the purpose of conducting any audit or investigation, the State  
21 Auditor or his or her authorized representative shall have access  
22 to the records and property of any public or private entity or person  
23 subject to review or regulation by the public agency or public entity  
24 being audited or investigated to the same extent that employees  
25 or officers of that agency or public entity have access. No provision  
26 of law providing for the confidentiality of any records or property  
27 shall prevent disclosure pursuant to subdivision (a), unless the  
28 provision specifically refers to and precludes access and  
29 examination and reproduction pursuant to subdivision (a). This  
30 subdivision does not apply to records compiled pursuant to Part 1  
31 (commencing with Section 8900) or Part 2 (commencing with  
32 Section 10200) of Division 2.

33 (c) Any officer or person who fails or refuses to permit access  
34 and examination and reproduction, as required by this section, is  
35 guilty of a misdemeanor.

36 SEC. 3. Section 8545.4 of the Government Code is amended  
37 to read:

38 8545.4. (a) In connection with any audit or investigation  
39 conducted by the State Auditor, the State Auditor or his or her  
40 designee, may do any of the following:

1 (1) Administer oaths.

2 (2) Certify to all official acts.

3 (3) Issue subpoenas for the attendance of witnesses and the  
4 production of papers, books, accounts, or documents, or for the  
5 making of oral or written sworn statements, in any interview  
6 conducted as part of an audit or investigation.

7 (b) Any subpoena issued under this section extends as process  
8 to all parts of the state and may be served by any person authorized  
9 to serve process of courts of record or by any person designated  
10 for that purpose by the State Auditor or his or her designee. The  
11 person serving this process may receive compensation as allowed  
12 by the State Auditor or his or her designee, not to exceed the fees  
13 prescribed by law for similar service.

14 (c) Notwithstanding Section 7470, 7474, or 7491, subpoenas  
15 issued under this section for financial records of financial  
16 institutions concerning customers of financial institutions or for  
17 information contained in those records shall not be subject to the  
18 requirement or conditions of Section 7474.

19 SEC. 4. Section 8546.2 of the Government Code is amended  
20 to read:

21 8546.2. (a) The State Auditor shall request that any state  
22 agency, as defined in Section 11000, whether created by the  
23 California Constitution or otherwise, any local governmental  
24 agency, including any city, county, city and county, school, or  
25 special district, or any publicly created entity, that is the subject  
26 of an audit or investigation conducted pursuant to this chapter  
27 provide updates on its progress in implementing the  
28 recommendations made by the State Auditor, at intervals prescribed  
29 by the State Auditor.

30 (b) Any state agency described in subdivision (a) shall provide  
31 the State Auditor, in the form prescribed by the State Auditor, with  
32 updates on implementation of recommendations as described in  
33 subdivision (a).

34 SEC. 5. Section 8546.10 is added to the Government Code, to  
35 read:

36 8546.10. (a) Notwithstanding Section 8544.5, as resources  
37 become available, the State Auditor shall establish the  
38 Clearinghouse for Government Innovation and Improvement  
39 Program.

(b) Upon establishing the program, the State Auditor shall create the means for members of the public to submit recommendations for improving the operations of the state or for directing the focus of the activities of the state toward the essential functions of government both via mail or other carrier and electronic submission through an Internet Web site portal. The State Auditor shall review, in good faith, submissions that recommend improvements to the efficiency of government operations or that recommend an approach that the state can take relative to an essential function of government. At the discretion of the State Auditor, selected recommendations shall be forwarded to the Governor, the Director of Finance, and the majority and minority party leaders in both houses of the Legislature for review.

(c) Upon establishing the Clearinghouse for Government Innovation and Improvement Program, as resources become available, the State Auditor shall take reasonable measures to create and maintain public awareness of the program.

SEC. 6. Section 8547.2 of the Government Code is amended to read:

8547.2. For the purposes of this article, the following terms have the following meanings:

(a) "Employee" means any individual appointed by the Governor or employed or holding office in a state agency as defined by Section 11000, including, for purposes of Sections 8547.3 to 8547.7, inclusive, any employee of the California State University or an individual appointed by the Legislature ~~who is not an employee of the Legislature~~ *to a state board or commission and who is not a Member or employee of the Legislature*. "Employee" includes any former employee who met the criteria of this subdivision during his or her employment.

(b) "Improper governmental activity" means any activity by a state agency or by an employee that is undertaken inside a state office or, if undertaken outside a state office, that directly relates to state government, whether or not that action is within the scope of his state agency or by an employee that is undertaken in the performance of the employee's duties, undertaken inside a state office, or, if undertaken outside a state office by the employee, directly relates to state government, whether or not that activity is within the scope of his or her employment, and that (1) is in violation of any state or federal law or regulation, including, but

1 not limited to, corruption, malfeasance, bribery, theft of  
2 government property, fraudulent claims, fraud, coercion,  
3 conversion, malicious prosecution, misuse of government property,  
4 or willful omission to perform duty, or (2) is economically  
5 wasteful, or involves gross misconduct, incompetency, or  
6 inefficiency. For purposes of Sections 8547.4, 8547.5, 8547.10,  
7 and 8547.11, “improper governmental activity” includes any  
8 activity by the University of California or by an employee,  
9 including an officer or faculty member, who otherwise meets the  
10 criteria of this subdivision.

11 (c) “Person” means any individual, corporation, trust,  
12 association, any state or local government, or any agency or  
13 instrumentality of any of the foregoing.

14 (d) “Protected disclosure” means any good faith communication,  
15 *including any communication based on, or when carrying out, job*  
16 *duties*, that discloses or demonstrates an intention to disclose  
17 information that may evidence (1) an improper governmental  
18 activity or (2) any condition that may significantly threaten the  
19 health or safety of employees or the public if the disclosure or  
20 intention to disclose was made for the purpose of remedying that  
21 condition. Protected disclosure specifically includes any good faith  
22 communication to the Bureau of State Audits alleging an improper  
23 governmental activity and any evidence delivered to the Bureau  
24 of State Audits in support of the allegation.

25 (e) “Illegal order” means any directive to violate or assist in  
26 violating a federal, state, or local law, rule, or regulation or any  
27 order to work or cause others to work in conditions outside of their  
28 line of duty that would unreasonably threaten the health or safety  
29 of employees or the public.

30 (f) “State agency” is defined by Section 11000. “State agency”  
31 includes the University of California for purposes of Sections  
32 8547.5 to 8547.7, inclusive, and the California State University  
33 for purposes of Sections 8547.3 to 8547.7, inclusive.

34 SEC. 7. Section 8547.4 of the Government Code is amended  
35 to read:

36 8547.4. The State Auditor shall administer this article and shall  
37 investigate and report on improper governmental activities. If,  
38 after investigating, the State Auditor finds that an employee may  
39 have engaged or participated in improper governmental activities,  
40 the State Auditor shall prepare an investigative report and send a

1 copy of the investigative report to the employee's appointing  
2 power. Subject to the limitations of Section 8547.5, the State  
3 Auditor may provide to the employee's appointing power any  
4 evidence gathered during the investigation that, in the judgment  
5 of the State Auditor, is necessary to support an adverse action or  
6 an action recommended pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section  
7 8547.7. Within 60 days after receiving a copy of the State Auditor's  
8 investigative report, the appointing power shall either serve a notice  
9 of adverse action upon the employee who is the subject of the  
10 investigative report or set forth in writing its reasons for not taking  
11 adverse action. The appointing power shall file a copy of the notice  
12 of adverse action with the State Personnel Board in accordance  
13 with Section 19574, and shall submit a copy to the State Auditor.  
14 If the appointing power does not take adverse action within 60  
15 days of receiving a copy of the State Auditor's investigative report,  
16 it shall submit its written reasons for not doing so to the State  
17 Auditor and the State Personnel Board, and adverse action may  
18 be taken as provided in Section 19583.5. Any employee who is  
19 served with a notice of adverse action may appeal to the State  
20 Personnel Board in accordance with Section 19575.

21 SEC. 8. Section 8547.5 of the Government Code is amended  
22 to read:

23 8547.5. (a) The State Auditor shall create the means for the  
24 submission of allegations of improper governmental activity both  
25 by transmission via mail or other carrier to a specified mailing  
26 address and electronic submission through an Internet Web site  
27 portal. The State Auditor may request that a person submitting an  
28 allegation provide his or her name and contact information and  
29 provide the names and contact information for any persons who  
30 could help to substantiate the claim. However, the State Auditor  
31 shall not require any person submitting an allegation to provide  
32 his or her name or contact information and shall clearly state on  
33 the agency Web site that this information is not required in order  
34 to submit an allegation.

35 (b) Upon receiving specific information that any employee or  
36 state agency has engaged in an improper governmental activity,  
37 the State Auditor may conduct an investigation of the matter. The  
38 identity of the person providing the information that initiated the  
39 investigation, or of any person providing information in confidence  
40 to further an investigation, shall not be disclosed without the



1 written permission of the person providing the information except  
2 that the State Auditor may make the disclosure to a law  
3 enforcement agency that is conducting a criminal investigation.

4 SEC. 9. Section 8547.6 of the Government Code is amended  
5 to read:

6 8547.6. The State Auditor may request the assistance of any  
7 state department, agency, or employee in conducting any  
8 investigation required by this article. If an investigation conducted  
9 by the State Auditor involves access to confidential academic peer  
10 review records of University of California academic personnel,  
11 these records shall be provided in a form consistent with university  
12 policy effective on August 1, 1992. No information obtained from  
13 the State Auditor by any department, agency, or employee as a  
14 result of the State Auditor's request for assistance, nor any  
15 information obtained thereafter as a result of further investigation,  
16 shall be divulged or made known to any person without the prior  
17 approval of the State Auditor.

18 SEC. 10. Section 8547.7 of the Government Code is amended  
19 to read:

20 8547.7. (a) If the State Auditor determines that there is  
21 reasonable cause to believe that an employee or state agency has  
22 engaged in any improper governmental activity, he or she shall  
23 report the nature and details of the activity to the head of the  
24 employing agency, or the appropriate appointing authority, and  
25 may include recommended actions to prevent the continuation or  
26 recurrence of the activity. If appropriate, the State Auditor shall  
27 report this information to the Attorney General, the policy  
28 committees of the Senate and Assembly having jurisdiction over  
29 the subject involved, and to any other authority that the State  
30 Auditor determines appropriate.

31 (b) The State Auditor shall not have any enforcement power.  
32 In any case in which the State Auditor submits a report of alleged  
33 improper activity to the head of the employing agency or  
34 appropriate appointing authority, that individual shall report to the  
35 State Auditor with respect to any action taken by the individual  
36 regarding the activity, the first report being transmitted no later  
37 than 60 days after the date of the State Auditor's report and  
38 monthly thereafter until final action has been taken.

39 (c) The State Auditor shall keep confidential every investigation,  
40 including, but not limited to, all investigative files and work

1 product, except that the State Auditor may issue any report of an  
2 investigation that has been substantiated, keeping confidential the  
3 identity of the individual or individuals involved, or, subject to  
4 the limitations of Section 8547.5, release any findings or evidence  
5 supporting any findings resulting from an investigation conducted  
6 pursuant to this article that is deemed necessary to serve the  
7 interests of the state.

8 (d) This section does not limit any authority conferred upon the  
9 Attorney General or any other department or agency of government  
10 to investigate any matter.

11 SEC. 11. Section 8548.9 of the Government Code is amended  
12 to read:

13 8548.9. (a) The State Auditor shall, by January 15th of each  
14 year, report to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee, the Joint  
15 Legislative Audit Committee, and the Department of Finance with  
16 respect to each recommendation he or she has made based on an  
17 audit or investigation that was reported more than one year prior  
18 and that has not been fully implemented by the affected agency.

19 (b) The report shall clearly identify the state agency audited or  
20 investigated, the audit or investigation that contained the  
21 recommendation, a brief description of the recommendation, the  
22 date it was issued, and the most recent explanation provided by  
23 the agency to the State Auditor on the status of the  
24 recommendation.

25 (c) Any state agency that is notified by the State Auditor that it  
26 has not fully implemented a recommendation made pursuant to  
27 this chapter more than one year prior, shall do either of the  
28 following:

29 (1) Provide a written report to the State Auditor, the respective  
30 policy committees and budget subcommittees of the Assembly  
31 and Senate with oversight of the agency, and the Department of  
32 Finance, explaining why the audit recommendation or investigation  
33 has not been fully implemented.

34 (2) Notify all entities described in subdivision (a) that it will  
35 begin implementing the audit recommendation or investigation  
36 recommendation within 90 days of the notification by the State  
37 Auditor, and include the estimated date of full implementation.

1     SEC. 12. The provisions enacted in this act shall impose no  
2     cost on the state and shall be implemented solely using existing  
3     resources.

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